

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the following paragraphs beginning at page 3, line 22 as follows:

FIGURE 3 is a bottom-elevation view of the crotch portion of the article of clothing depicted in FIGURE 1, the crotch portion shown in an open position; [[and]]

FIGURE 4 is a bottom-elevation view of another exemplary embodiment of the crotch portion of the article of clothing formed according to various aspects of the present invention; and

~~FIGURE 4~~ FIGURE 5 is a vertical sectional view through the torso of the user of the article of clothing depicted in FIGURE 1, the crotch portion shown in a closed position.

Please amend the following paragraph beginning at page 4, line 25 as follows:

Still referring to FIGURE 1, the body-encircling portion 32 further includes a crotch portion 38. Referring to FIGURES 2 and 3, the crotch portion 38 includes first and second flaps 40 and 42 both flaps having free or external edges 44 and 46. The free edges 44 and 46 are not attached to, but distal from, the corresponding right and left leg portions 32 and 34. The crotch portion 38 is positionable between closed (FIGURE 2) and open (FIGURE 3) positions. Referring to ~~FIGURE 2~~ FIGURES 1 and 2, when the crotch portion 38 is in the closed position, the first flap 40 is overlapped by the second flap 42 such that the first flap 40 rests in proximity to the external vaginal area 20 of the user and the second flap 42 rests against the outer surface of the first flap 40 to form a covering 54 for the external vaginal area 20 of the user.

Please amend the following paragraph beginning at page 5, line 6 as follows:

The free edge 44 of the first flap 40 and the free edge 46 of the second flap 42 may be displaced from the centerline of the external vaginal 20 area of the user. In the illustrated embodiment, the edges of the first and second flaps 40 and 42 are composed of substantially

arcuate line-segments. In other embodiments, the edges of the first and second flaps ~~[[40]]~~ 140 and ~~[[42]]~~ 142 may be substantially straight line-segments (see FIGURE 4).

Referring now to ~~FIGURE 4~~ FIGURE 5, the first flap 40 is illustrated as being directly on top of the second flap 42 (i.e., the first flap 40 is inside of the second flap 42) when the crotch portion is in a closed position and the user is in an upright position.

Please amend the following paragraphs beginning at page 5, line 14 as follows:

Referring again to ~~FIGURE 2~~ FIGURES 1 and 2, the first and second flaps 40 and 42 overlap to form a covering 54 for an external vaginal area 20 of a user. This covering 54 may be an anatomically-compatible covering for the external vaginal area 20 of the user. Anatomically-compatible is defined as fitting the body part or area in a comfortable and proper way, for example, in the way that a sock fits a foot or a glove fits a hand. The first and second flaps 40 and 42 are positioned, shaped, and sized to anatomically fit the external vaginal area 20. To this end, the covering 54 provides a substantially flat and seamless area with which it may directly cover the external vaginal area 20 of the user. When the article of clothing is worn by the user, the covering 54 conforms to the external vaginal area 20 to form a substantially concave, or crescent-shaped, covering with inward roundness against the external vaginal area 20 of the user.

An anatomically-compatible covering 54 includes a substantially flat and seamless area that directly covers the external vaginal area 20 of the user. Still referring to ~~FIGURE 2~~ FIGURES 1 and 2, the substantially flat and seamless area of the covering 54 protects the external vaginal area 20 of the user when the crotch portion 38 is in a closed position. For purposes of this detailed description, the external vaginal area 20 includes the labia majora (or the outer pair of lips) of the vagina and the outer organs of the vagina. When the crotch portion 38 is in a closed position, the free edges 44 and 46 of the first and the second flaps 40 and 42 are spaced laterally outward from the centerline of the vaginal area of the user to ensure that the covering 54 does not have a seam disposed along the centerline of the external vaginal area 20 of the user. Moreover, when in a closed position, at least one line segment of the free edge 44 of the first flap 44 and at least one line segment of the free edge 46 of the second

flap 42, are not substantially parallel to the centerline of the external vaginal area 20 of the user. The edges of the anatomically-compatible covering 54 may be spaced outward from the external vaginal area 20 so that they may generally lie at the crease between a woman's upper thigh and pelvic area. By spacing the free edges 44 and 46 of the first and second flaps 40 and 42 from the centerline of the vaginal area, the seams are impeded from entering the labia majora or causing irritation to the sensitive areas of the external vaginal area 20.

Please amend the following paragraphs beginning at page 6, line 28 as follows:

The crotch portion 38 is normally biased in a closed position to fully cover the external vaginal area 20 of the user. To open the crotch portion 38, a user spreads the first and second flaps 40 and 42 apart to create an opening. In some instances, the crotch portion 38 may open slightly if the user positions herself with her legs apart in a wide-legged stance or sitting position. When the crotch portion 38 is in an open position, the body encircling portion 32 still includes two distinct right and left leg portions 34 and 36.

Please amend the following paragraphs beginning at page 7, line 23 as follows:

In the illustrated embodiment, four snap fasteners 52 are coupled to the first and second flaps 40 and 42 and arranged on the flaps so that they are positioned, when the crotch portion 38 is in a closed position, outside the labia majora or other sensitive areas of the external vaginal 20 area of the user. The female snap members can be sewn on the first flap and the male snap members can be sewn on the second flap, or vice versa. In other embodiments, less than four snap fasteners may be arranged on the first and second flaps. In other embodiments, more than four snap fasteners may be arranged on the first and second flaps.